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**TYLER WISLER:
"Trend Lightly"**

**ANTIQUES:
Trash to Treasure**

**TECHNOLOGY:
Homes of Tomorrow**

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OF THE
2016 YEAR
MINNESOTA MAGAZINE & PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION

567

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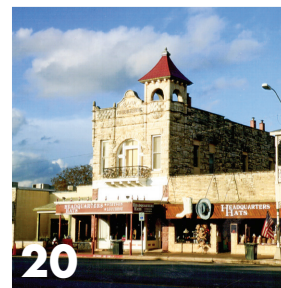
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ON THE COVER

What advice does Tyler Wisler give for home decor this season? "Trend lightly." Read more on page 28. Photo courtesy of Living Spaces

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LAVENDER

Volume 22, Issue 567 • February 16-March 1, 2017

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Lavender Media, Inc.

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612-436-4698 **NEPA Advertising**



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You can! All you have to do is show up with your teammates and friends to our Score Thursday events, the third Thursday of every month! We welcome all the members of organized gay leagues/teams of bowling, pickleball, ping pong, billiards, rugby, futbol, softball, tennis, volleyball...and all the other sports out there that support our many community members in the state. While Score Thursdays are geared toward athletes, fitness buffs, and sports fans, if you're not on a team or a person who's active, it's open to everyone, regardless of your interest in sports.

Lavender currently sponsors five teams of various sports, so they'll be in attendance and we encourage other teams to join them. Back to the topic of money, we hold contests each Score Thursday, and the teams (whether sponsored by us or not) that bring the most people with them

(friends, fans, team members) will win \$50, \$100, or \$150. There will also be prizes and drink specials and appetizers for all. Score Thursday is a win-win for everyone.

The team winners from our Score Thursday event on Jan. 19 at Union were:

1st Place - \$150.00 - Minneapolis Mayhem RFC (rugby team)

2nd Place - \$100.00 - Bears! Dontcha Know! (Red Ribbon Ride bicycle team)

3rd Place - \$50.00 - Twin Cities Saints (softball team)

Get your teammates, fans, family, and friends and bring them to our next Score Thursday on Feb. 16 at Union, so you can score some money for your team. ■

For more information, go to www.lavendermagazine.com/scorethursdays

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Nature Adores A Redundancy

Nature, like NASA, likes to make sure something, however odd or eccentric, survives to complete its mission. Sending humans to Mars? Better have multiple sources for life support. Intelligence? All the while man has been using his brand of intelligence to get this close to space travel, nature has, from the get-go, branched the tree of life to produce a variety of sentient, thinking, even reasoning twigs and buds. Not all of them read Schopenhauer, sculpt a Pietà, or paint “The Starry Night.”

Recently, a lot of ink (sic) has been devoted to cephalopods, concerning their level of intelligence, their awareness of life around them and, in a broader sense, how these animals, starting half a billion years ago, went from sea floor-rooted mollusks up to the present day nautilus, cuttlefish, squid, and octopus.

Sy Montgomery’s *The Soul of an Octopus* is subtitled “A Surprising Exploration into the Wonder of Consciousness,” while *Other Minds: The Octopus, the Sea, and the Deep Origins of Consciousness* is the title of Peter Godfrey-Smith’s study. Montgomery’s is the more personal, focusing in loving detail on specific animals she encountered at the New England Aquarium, while Godfrey-Smith, an experienced scuba diver, spent much time observing animals in a place dubbed “Oc-

topolis,” off the east coast of Australia. In addition to the creatures themselves, Godfrey-Smith seeks the hows/whens/whys in terms of consciousness coming into being in the first place. Chapter headings like “From White Noise to Consciousness” make the reader realize that his as well as cephalopods’ mind is being discussed. Redundancy reigns; each octopus tentacle essentially has a life of its own, tasting, sensing, able to act independently or together with its fellows. Research has shown that nearly twice as many of an octopus’s neurons reside in its arms than in its brain.

These studies, together with the more well-known prodigies, like elephants and chimpanzees, are being added to our knowledge of those avian whiz kids, parrots and corvids. Books and films of them in intelligent, considered action, impel one to wonder what roles these creatures may play in the future. Mankind, despite its chest-thumping and posturing, may not be the biggest (or, if the biggest, not the only) cheese.

Kingdoms rise and fall, civilizations wax and wane, but our globe teems with living otherness. Humanity as we know it rates mere ticks on the cosmic clock. If we sink, others with their alien talents will rise. Life will continue: the earth abides. ■

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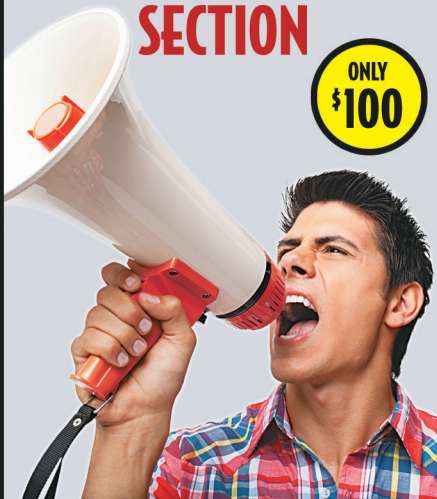
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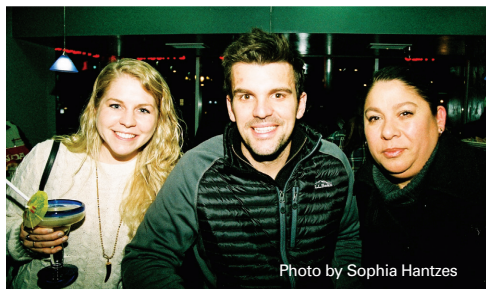
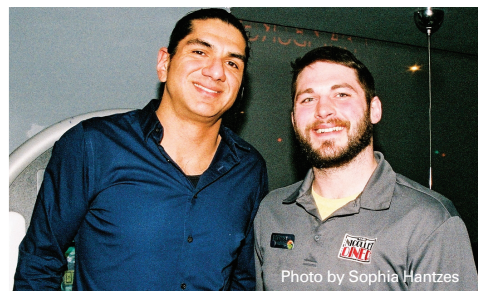
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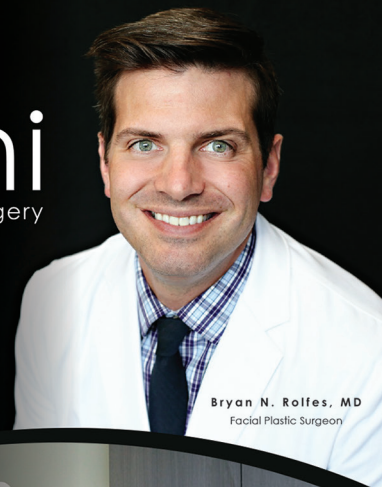
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Bad Dates. Photo by Hilary Roberts

BAD DATES

Through Feb. 26

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www.artistrymn.org

Sara Marsh performs Theresa Rebeck's solo play *Bad Dates*. She says, "From the moment I read the script, I thought, *I understand this woman*. Haley is funny and sassy and chic and fashionable, but she's also an intelligent, strong woman running a business because she has a gift and a passion for it, because she saw the opportunity when it came along and was savvy enough to take it and make it a success. So she's smart

and tough. And she makes a lot of mistakes, but she is resilient; nothing she encounters keeps her down. In fact, those things drive her forward."

Marsh adds, "This isn't a neat, tidy story. This is a funny, moving, messy story about a smart woman with real struggles and real guts who has the fortitude and wisdom to keep going in the face of adversity. And the humor sugars the pill of just how hard it is to be living a life as a single woman, raising a child, running her own business in a competitive industry in new York City, feeling lonely but dealing with the disappointing reality of what dating in the real world truly is."

THE HIGHWAYMEN

Through Feb. 26

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www.historytheatre.com

St. Paul's Rondo neighborhood was decimated in 1956 by the construction of Interstate 94. It was the city's largest African American community. The History Theatre presents a look into the decision-making process that excluded the bulk of the community that was impacted. Playwright Josh Wilder says his play "examines the men behind the closed doors that impacted Rondo forever and the community leaders of Rondo who did their best to save it."

What happens when public policy is invisible and nontransparent? Who is allowed behind closed doors to discuss it and who is not? Director Jamil Jude says those kept out of the discussion "were made to feel invisible, about the homes that were destroyed and literally made invisible."

PETER AND THE STARCATCHER

Through Feb. 26

**Ritz Theater, 345 13th Ave. NE
Minneapolis
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www.latteda.org

This prequel to *Peter Pan* asks how Peter Pan became the boy who never grew up. It won five Tony Awards in 2012 and ranks among the most innovative shows that ever played Broadway. Theater Latté Da gives us the first local, professional production.

Music director Denise Prosek points out that *Peter and the Starcatcher* "is full of fun, whimsy, and surprises, and it's almost entirely created by the cast. There are instruments all over the set which are used for sound effects and underscoring such as lightning, cannons, birds, twinkling stars, romantic encounters, and bodily functions too! We've incorporated sea shanties to whisk the audience immediately into the adventurous world of pirates, and the rhythm of bamboo poles banging on the floor sends us to an island jungle. There's a rousing anthem and even a song in the style of an English music hall number. At every turn, there's always something new."

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Not A Moment Too Soon. Photo by Yoana Miguel

(1919–2009) changed the way in which dance was perceived by its performers and, therefore, received by audiences. He was openly gay and his romantic partnership with composer John Cage is legendary. For the last 15 years of Cunningham's life, Trevor Carlson who was the executive director of the Cunningham Foundation, had deep personal access to the innovator's life.

Spanish director Ferran Carvajal interviewed Carlson and out of this has come this interdisciplinary performance, narrated in first person by Carlson about his and Cunningham's mutual experiences and the last chapter of Cunningham's life. Text, music, choreography, and video never seen previously, shot by Cunningham himself. The piece debuted in Barcelona. The Cowles Center hosts its North American debut.

Something that makes the piece resonate locally is the relationship that the late arts philanthropist Sage Cowles had with Cunningham. Her son, Jay, shares, "From the moment Sage saw Merce perform as a young soloist with Martha Graham in the mid-1940s, she was inspired and intrigued by his artistry and his vision. She remained a devoted supporter and friend throughout his life."

Sage Cowles first met Cunningham when she was a student at the School of American Ballet. She served as a board member of the

Cunningham Dance Foundation for four decades. She held a private ceremony to bless the Cowles Center stage in Cunningham's memory, a sign of her aspiration for the center and for dance in Minnesota.

AS YOU LIKE IT
Feb. 17–March 5
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Samantha Papke plays one of the most famous cross-gender roles in the history of comedy in William Shakespeare's *As You Like It* presented by Classical Actors Ensemble. She points out that "at the start of the play Rosalind is an awkward and clunky version of her brilliant self that we see later on. It isn't until she's disguised as a boy that she gains the confidence that allows her to explore, and even exploit, the uncertainty and excitement she feels in her love for Orlando."

Papke continues, "The thing I've noticed about playing Rosalind is how other characters respond to 'Rosalind the lady' versus 'Ganymede the boy.' It can be really subtle at times, but Ganymede definitely has more open, honest, and trustworthy interactions with others. I've noticed this in other traditionally male and gender-swapped roles I've played, but it's more pronounced in *As You Like It* since Rosalind starts out as a rather timid and awkward girl in the court and ends up taking advantage of her masculine disguise in the woods so she can experience a life beyond societal norms. I'm reminded of what I've read about the experiences of transgender men realizing just how biased society is toward masculinity once they've gone through their transformation. You don't necessarily see the bias until you're the one who's being perceived differently. Rosalind's transformation lies just as much in those around her as it does within herself." ■



As You Like It. Graphic Design by Joseph Papke

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Main Street of Fredericksburg, Texas. Photo by Carla Waldemar

Fredericksburg

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I'm deep in the heart of Texas, reliving the refrain of the '40s cowboy ballad. The stars at night are big and bright, just as he promised. And as we drive along, I mentally supply the clap-clap-clap that interrupts each verse (thus banned on the British airwaves during WWII because of potential injury to listening factory workers, who couldn't resist adding their applause, true story).

Anyway. We're driving through Texas Hill Country, rather than the famous flat-as-a-flapjack plains. Here, the terrain is too rolling for cattle ranchers. The only longhorn I spot belongs to a deer.

This is the corner of America where upstanding farmers from Germany were invited to settle in the mid-1800s, encouraged to grow peaches, grapes and such on the vast terrain surrounding the town they founded

(Fredericksburg) where today "Wilkommen" signs still flourish and local businesses flaunt "Haus" in their titles.

Those original immigrants lived too far from the outskirts for their ox teams to make the trip and back in an afternoon, so farmers were awarded a tiny lot in town as well, where they erected Sunday Houses: one-room cottages of lumber or limestone (no water, no heat) with maybe a loft for the kids to sleep, reached by an outdoor ladder. Thus the pious Germans could conduct their Saturday business, enjoy a beer that night, then attend Sunday church before heading home.

The bonus is, many of these iconic dwellings still remain, renovated inside to serve as shops, café, and B&Bs. They're easy to spot as you amble down Main Street and its environs, armed with a self-guided walk-



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(From left) Another Sunday House of a more affluent German settler. Fisher and Weiser's, the chef demos shrimp and grits. Photos by Carla Waldemar

ing tour map, or, even easier, a trolley tour departing from the tourist office. Its narrator stops for a peek into St. Mary's Church of 1908, called a "painted church" in honor of its shimmering stained-glass windows, each with a German inscription. We then ogle the White Elephant Saloon from 1827, which now serves as an inn and wine-tasting room, neighbor to many humble-to-fancy dwellings built in Fachwerk style (x-beamed exterior timbers filled in with stone rubble). Also noteworthy is the original jail, big enough for a single miscreant.

For a more in-depth immersion, head to Main Street's Pioneer Museum, a landscape of buildings original to the site plus those moved here to preserve them. Step into a one-room schoolhouse; a furnished Sunday House near the windmill that drew its water; the communal bathhouse-cum-barbershop; and more. Audio descriptions of the lifestyle spring forth as you cross each threshold, enhanced by guide Evelyn Weinheimer, who points to the steamer trunks, kids' toys and musical instruments as familiar household objects when she grew up here.

Nearby stands the Vereinshaus, a unique eight-sided building and sometimes-church, constructed to be able to spot possibly hostile Indians' approach from any direction. Today it houses objects brought from Germany with those original arrivals: rifles, branding irons, and cookie cutters, plus an intriguing Luther Bible from 1665.

Then there's this surprise museum, the National Museum of the Pacific War, launched in 2009 amid the land-bound Texas hills. Here? Why, one has to ask? Well, because this is the hometown of World War II's Admiral Nimitz, who commanded the Pacific's operations. (In fact, the Nimitz Hotel of 1860 — a stagecoach stop back then — still dominates Main Street, just where its proprietor, the Admiral's grandfather, erected it.)

I'd planned to spend a couple of hours in the museum, but be advised: It wasn't half-enough time to absorb the story, retold by newsreels of the time, participants' oral accounts, models of warships and the opposing fleets in action. See the submarine that attacked Pearl Harbor while gunfire and flames erupt behind it on a wide screen. Continue to the impossible battles on the Philippines, Wake, Guam, Bataan, Iwo Jima, and other islands nobody'd ever heard of before. The museum also honors the story of Japanese-American citizens ruthlessly forced into internment camps here in the U.S.

Visitors also descend on Fredericksburg for its near-endless shopping ops. Main Street is pack-pack-packed with 150 indies (no chains allowed in the Historic District), each eager to sell you faux-cowboy everything. I succumbed (bad girl!) at one of its galleries supporting local artists, such as Insight, housed in a 1907 dry-goods store whose high tin ceiling and lime-stone walls support 60 regional talents. River Rustic celebrates another 50 artists whose works center on quirky contempo pieces such as the Flag of Texas, constructed out of bullets, and cigar-box purses.

Or venture a bit off the beaten track to Magnolia Pearl, built of salvaged barn wood, with its filmy, romantic unisex clothing displayed on, say, a piano keyboard or antique bedsteads. If you, too, wish to look like a Merchant Ivory starlet, they'll ship you "pick boxes," simply return what you don't fancy.

Carol Hicks Bolton runs three side-by-side warehouses crammed with rustic French antiques, from rustic crucifixes to bicycles and wooden puppets. And Larry Johnson specializes in Texas art and antiques, focusing on a menagerie of stuffed animals and silver jewelry.

Thirsty by now? This is no longer solely Dr. Pepper country. Not only does Texas sport over 400 wineries, but, here in Fredericksburg, the first-ever Texas brewery: Fredericksburg Brewing Company, launched in 1994. Today its Not So Dumb Blonde leads the list, followed by Peace Pipe Pale Ale and Pioneer Porter. Munch on beer-infused meatloaf and cheddar soup too. Or stay in the upstairs B&B, where the second "B" signifies not "breakfast" but "beer." Pedernales Brewing Company came upon the scene five years ago with Texas lager as its flagship pour and dark Lobo Negro its medal-winner.

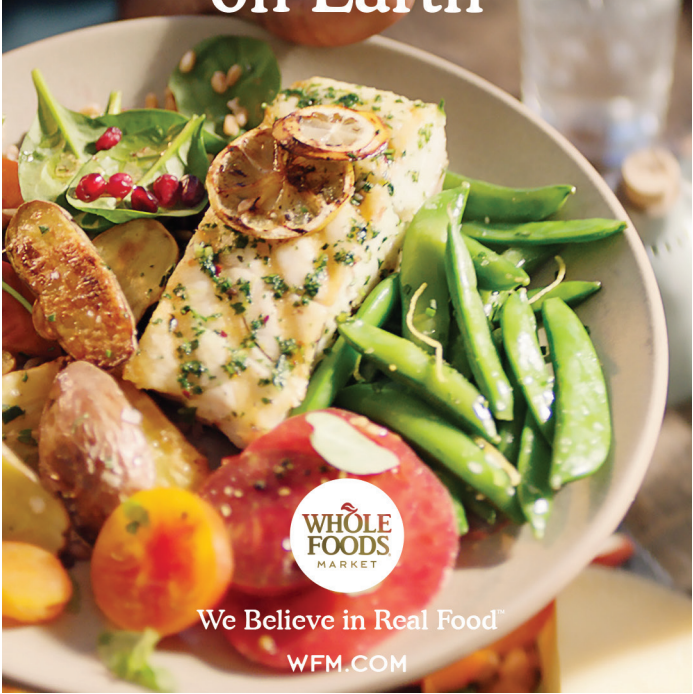
Food, you ask? It's DIY at Fischer & Wieser's Culinary Adventures Cooking School, owned by Mark Wieser, who grew it from a log cabin ca. 1870 ("You paid \$150 for *that*?" declared his shortsighted mama as she smacked him upside the head.) The kid used it to sell peaches from the family property. Then, while later teaching school, hired on a student named Fischer, who had one of those eureka moments that led to marketing jalapeno jelly; the first to introduce that addictive pepper to the American palate, resulting in the outfit's now-legendary national best seller: roasted raspberry chipotle sauce.

You'll find it, and many offshoots, in the company's retail shop, aside which stands a cooking school where guests learn how to make, then enjoy, a three-course meal. Ours led with Frito pie (Texans need no explanation. For the rest of us, it's chili mixed with those corn chips), then shrimp and grits, and finally Peaches (no surprise) Foster.

Where else to eat? An upscale/minimalist site called Otto's German Bistro for a foie gras BLT or frikadellen (bison patties with blackberry reduction and Dijon caper gravy) followed by duck schnitzel with spaetzle, red cabbage and paprikash sauce; or wild boar goulash aside savory bread pudding. Try the Old German Bakery for Teutonic treats from the oven. And then there's a sweet haven called Vaudeville, below-stairs in an accessories shop of the same name. Here, succumb to the fancy baked goods or the likes of a Brussels sprout/pork belly flatbread (a whole-hearted yum) or elaborate, and sublime, BLT. Don't forget the coconut/blond raisin rice pudding. ■

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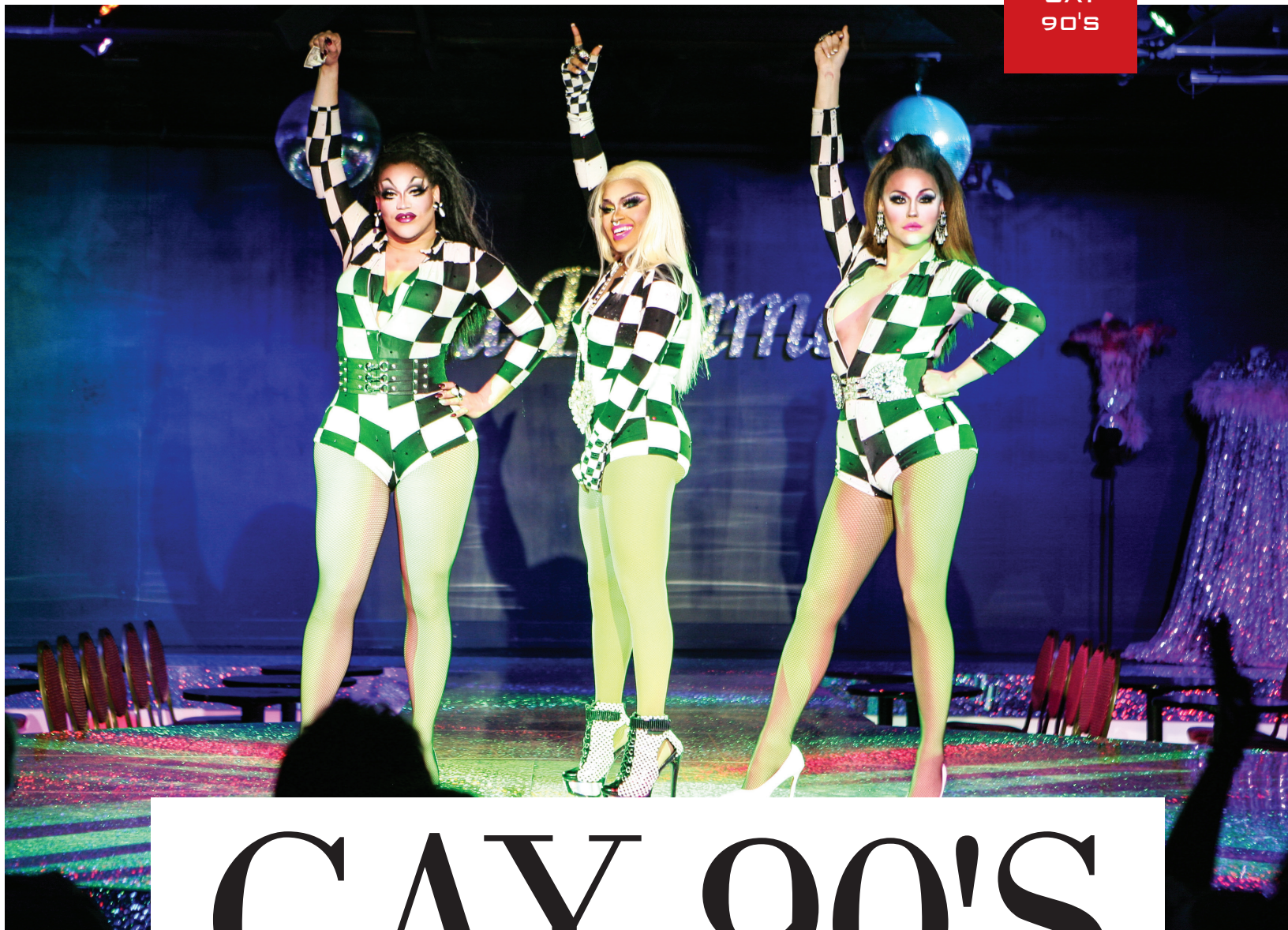


Photo by Mike Hnida

GAY 90'S

HOSTS GALA GRAND OPENING OF NEW LA FEMME SHOW LOUNGE

BY GEORGE HOLDGRAFER

Fabulous Refashioned Space Is Crown Jewel of Megabar

On the evening of Jan. 13, the Gay 90's hosted the gala grand opening of its new La Femme Show Lounge upstairs. This fabulous refashioned space is now a worthy home for the best female impersonator show the Twin Cities has ever seen. Las Vegas, eat your heart out!

The transformed La Femme is the culmination of a half-century of drag shows at the popular downtown Minneapolis bar. In 1964, drag performances debuted on the main floor of the Gay 90's. By the

1980s, the small Casablanca Lounge (the name was an homage to the original name of the bar in the 1940s) upstairs held weekly drag shows. In 1996, the expanded and rechristened La Femme Show Lounge opened, taking up much of the second floor. Two decades later, a massive remodeling of the space got under way last spring and was completed by the end of the year.

A capacious raised round stage predominates at the center of the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26 ➔



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Photos by Mike Hnida

new lounge, with an ample entrance area from the Fourth Street side of the room. Gone at last (cheers, everyone!) is the infamous supporting pillar of the old La Femme that obscured a view of the stage for some of the audience. Comfortable new seating with tables lets guests view shows from anywhere in the room. State-of-the-art sound and lighting from a new DJ booth now accompany the performances. Ultra-attractive new carpeting and drapery enhance the room.

On both sides of the stage, reasonably priced VIP seating is available, featuring custom-curved booths. The raised seating, connected to the stage, allows patrons the best view of shows in the house. Personal bottle service via a waiter offers a choice of vodka, gin, rum, bourbon, and whiskey. Convenient drawers are underneath the seating for guests' belongings.

Another welcome feature of the new La Femme Show Lounge: the completely refurbished dressing rooms for all the performers. Each show girl now has her own private, spacious, well-lit place to prepare for the stage. As well, the cast has its own bathroom.

More improvements currently are planned for the upstairs at the Gay 90's. Adjacent to La Femme, a new serving bar with seating is in the works, along with updated bathrooms for patrons. Plus, a completely new elevator at the back of the Gay 90's soon will bring customers comfortably to the second floor.

The La Femme Show Lounge cast is a well-known mainstay for the local bar-going community. Prada Diamond, renowned for her awesome glam costumes, is the show director. Emcees are the always-

sassy Brandonna Dupri-Lareese and the ever-elegant Violet Femme. Regular performers include the talented Mercedes Iman Diamond, Anita Rivera, Tina Gee, and Julia Starr. Guest entertainers often take the stage as well. Shows take place Friday–Sunday, 9:00 p.m.–2:00 a.m.

The new La Femme Show Lounge is an impressive tribute to the vision of Gay 90's owner Peter Hafiz, who begins his 10th year of owning the bar on May 16, 2017. During that decade, he has completely redone the following components of the establishment: the Happy Hour Bar and adjacent bathrooms in 2009, followed by the Retro Bar upstairs and Men's Room Bar downstairs, plus a host of other changes. He also owns the Brass Rail a few doors away. The north side of Hennepin Avenue between Fourth Street and Fifth Street in Downtown Minneapolis is the only remaining block on the avenue with its original buildings, and Hafiz has done something amazing for local history by preserving and improving the block's major landmark, the Gay 90's.

Drag performers are often called queens, and the outstanding transformed La Femme Show Lounge is certainly the crown jewel of the venerable Gay 90's, fit for a queen. Don't miss the penultimate local female impersonator experience there. ■

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A man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a grey polo shirt and jeans, is leaning over a blue tufted sofa. He is holding a red and white patterned pillow. The sofa is decorated with a red and white striped blanket and two other pillows, one pink and one with a colorful geometric pattern. In front of the sofa is a glass coffee table with a small potted plant and a blue box. The background features a white brick wall, a wooden side table with a lamp, and a large black metal shelving unit filled with books, plants, and decorative objects.

TYLER WISLER

"TREND LIGHTLY"

BY SHANE LUECK

Attendees of the Minneapolis Home + Garden Show will know main stage speaker Tyler Wisler from HGTV's *Design Star*, but Wisler's path didn't always lead to interior design. Wisler entered college knowing he wanted to pursue art in some way, yet had no clear direction. Attending American University in D.C. (though he grew up in Hawaii), he discovered a degree program as unspecific as his career plans were: art design.

It was in the dorms that the notion of interior design struck him as a viable option, thanks to suggestions from friends pointing out how well-designed his room was. "It's funny, because I don't usually remember this tidbit," he says. "But looking back at my time in the dorms, I had a full set of tableware. And I mean a full set of four: salad

plates, soup bowls, and everything. I don't know who I thought I was entertaining in a dorm room, but maybe that's why my friends kept saying I should be an interior designer."

After transferring schools to New York School of Interior Design (to receive a certificate) and graduating from Marymount University

Photo courtesy of "Living Spaces"



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with a BA in Interior Design, he knew he had found his calling. Since then, he has been exciting people with his unique approach to tailoring environments through the integration of vintage industrial elements dovetailed with modern sensibilities. Now, with more than 16 years in the industry, Wisler has established himself as one of New York's most influential and dynamic designers with an international clientele as well as appearances on *Good Morning America* and in the pages of *Architectural Digest*, *Elle Decor*, *New York Spaces*, and recently *HOSS Magazine* offered Tyler a position as one of their permanent celebrity contributors.

With the influence of fashion and an eye for juxtaposing classicism and contemporary elements, the talented creative isn't timid when it comes to pushing the envelope to execute beautiful living environments. Describing his design aesthetic as "industrial luxe," he says he personally gravitates toward things that are "darker, edgier, and sexier. I also like to throw a splash of gold in; I love the look of a luxe gold chandelier in contrast with an industrial table. That contrast is exciting to me."

Yet when it comes to his clients, he puts his personal style aside; it's all about making the client happy. He says, "What I do for clients is make sure they are in a space that represents them best. My personal style isn't always what I create for them because at the end of the day

they're living in the space."

As such, he is proud of everything he's designed with no regrets. "If the client is happy, I'm happy," he says with a smile.

But he cautions homeowners: trend lightly. "You should pay attention to trends because they matter a certain amount in updating the space," he says. "But don't go overboard; I like to tell people to 'trend lightly.' In other words, incorporate trends and patterns in small ways that don't cost a lot of money."

He notes, for example, the current trend he identifies as an updated *Golden Girls* aesthetic: large palm leaves against a blush pink background that is taking the world by storm. Think about the potential for incorporating trends in a pillow or piece of art, he says, rather than wallpaper.

"When it comes to bigger pieces, stick with neutrals that stand the test of time," he adds. "You might love that pink couch, but a couple years later you're going to ask yourself what the hell you were thinking."

Loving the Pantone color of the year? Instead of investing in a couch that isn't as easily replaceable, Wisler is a firm believer in the area rug. Visually differentiating areas without putting up a physical border, he says, can ground the space and add a visual pop, especially

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32 ➔

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when layering floor coverings.

"Rugs are amazingly expensive," he observes. "You look at the price of a large rug, say an 8-by-10, and it's astounding how expensive it can be. So I always tell people to look for smaller rugs that they can use together, and often the price of a couple 4-by-6 or 5-by-7 rugs is cheaper than the one big rug. Then you also get the chance to play with different complementary colors and patterns that you wouldn't get with one big one."

"Trend lightly" doesn't just pertain to the amount of a certain trend to incorporate into your home; it's also a caution against being a slave to trends. Wisler encourages clients to stay true to their own aesthetic and avoid trends or designs that aren't a match, something that may seem like common sense but too many people seem to get bogged down by.

Anyone wanting to know what's coming up in home design trends need look no further than fashion runways. "Fashion is always a step or two ahead of interior design just because it takes longer to manufacture interiors," he says. "You can predict interior design trends by following fashion, but it's a fine line because by the time they make

TYLER WISLER

it to interior design, that trend may be over and played out. You have to be careful."

Companies have started to take note of how fashion can play into interior design. He has been sought out by not only the mega-online retailer OpenSky to be one of their taste-makers, but he is also an "eBay Influencer," and a content creator for Skype.

Most notably though, Wisler is a Pinterest "Pinfluencer" in both the home decor and men's fashion categories touted by both *Mashable* and *The Huffington Post* as "one to follow."

During the first weekend of the Minneapolis Home + Garden Show, Wisler will be taking over the main stage to discuss his design tips and designer do's and don'ts to help attendees make their own space look like it's had a designer's touch. But for those not looking for an entire redesign, he suggests starting with lighting.

"Create different levels of lighting," he suggests. "By that I mean, use different types of lighting at different levels, so you can light various areas of the room for different purposes. Like, recessed lighting mixed with floor lamps and table lamps. And dimmers are your best friend. If



Photo courtesy of "Living Spaces"



Photo courtesy of "Living Spaces"

you want to curl up with a book in bed or something, you don't want a harsh overhead light. Mix it up to create different moods for different needs."

He is also a proponent of the old adage "measure twice, cut once." Not to mention planning ahead and never jumping into a project. "I can't tell you how many times I'll be at the store and see people just staring at the wall of paint chips," he laughs. "Just standing there staring and wasting time. They clearly spent no time thinking about what color family they're even looking for. Do you want greens? Grays? Blues? Think about it and then go look at chips."

And always, always make sure you're using your budget wisely. "The best advice I can give is to use a professional for bathrooms and kitchens," Wisler says. "People set a \$20,000 budget for a kitchen remodel and think they'll save money by doing it themselves. But then they find the cabinets don't fit, they're in over their heads, making mistakes, and eventually consult a professional. Suddenly they're way over budget and realizing they should have started with a professional in the first place, at least with kitchens and baths, which are much more complex than people realize."

Ultimately, Wisler's advice is to have fun with your home design. "At the end of the day, design should be accessible to everyone." ■

To hear more of Wisler's home design tips, catch him at the Minneapolis Home + Garden Show the first weekend, Feb. 24-26. For a full schedule and to purchase tickets, head to www.homeandgardenshow.com.

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TRASH TO TREASURE


BY KASSIDY TARALA

There's something about a cluttered, eclectic antique shop that takes me back to my childhood. The old books, collections of colorful teacups, and unique statement furniture pieces transport me to a simpler time. Suddenly I'm back in my childhood home baking holiday cookies with my mom. I'm taking a stroll with my grandpa to the nearest park while the trees drop leaves like soft kisses of autumn. The second I enter an antique shop, my mind dances through the decades, taking pieces — and their history — from the past and repurposing them for today.

I recently took a stroll down memory lane with the help of some of Minneapolis' most unique antique and consignment shops. My first stop was **Covet Consign + Design**, a furniture consignment shop. The store presents a cozy boutique appearance, but once you delve into their collection of hidden treasures, you discover a vast world of vintage furniture and colorful artwork. Covet has two storefronts, a basement, and an open warehouse stocked with historical pieces

begging to make their mark on new homes. The two storefronts are covered wall-to-wall in beautiful artwork, including a series of paintings by local abstract artist Ashley Mary. Once you head downstairs, you'll find yourself reminiscing on the past with chairs, desks, and tables straight out of the '90s, '70s, and even '50s. The warehouse is a walk through history. Brightly colored chairs, patio furniture, and vintage wall decorations give the storage space a blast from the past.

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All of Covet's pieces are staged strategically to display their functionality and show how different pieces could work together.

For more information, visit www.covetconsignanddesign.com.

My next stop was **The Cottage House**, a gay-owned shop with a homey feel that appealed to my nostalgic side. The sidewalk leading to the doors is lined in vibrantly colored furniture, vintage mirrors, and statement pieces that are sure to double as conversation starters. Once you enter the cozy shop, you know that you won't be leaving any time soon. The store houses multiple rooms, each of which has its own overall theme. Several racks of jewelry and small trinkets provide endless gift options. For the book lovers, an entire wall is dedicated to books cut into letters and the outline of Minnesota — literature with sentimental value. Even the restroom is decked out in antiques! Each piece offers something different, but every piece offers the same abundance of history in a nostalgic nod toward the past.

For more information, visit www.thecottagehousempls.com.

In my journey to the past, I stopped at **Junket: Tossed and Found**, a store overflowing onto the streets with antiques. When you walk through the doors, you'll be greeted by the owners and a table with free donuts, coffee and tea. The store nails the home-away-from-home feeling; there's even an "anti-social shop dog" named Luna who gets carried around in a pouch by one of the owners. Frames, art supplies, crafting items, stationery, and posters will appeal to your creative side. Office supplies, stamps, kitchen utensils, and a variety of clothing lead into the next room. Every item in the store is either consigned or made in the store out of reused materials, including a selection of earrings made out of recycled bullets. For the youngsters, there's a section of toys, children's and baby clothes, and a free library. Junket's basement was my favorite area of the store. The second I made my way to the bottom of the narrow staircase, I was transported to my grandparents' basement. Surrounded by antique Hot Wheels, old Barbie dolls, and antique board

games, I was no longer in a store but in the basement where I spent hours upon hours playing games with my older sister. This antique shop bleeds nostalgia, and you'll surely find yourself losing track of time while gazing at each uniquely crafted piece.

For more information, visit www.shopjunket.com.

Another of Minnesota's hidden treasures is **Shop 501**, the mother of a series of retailers including Jane Hall of Mustard Moon, Suzanne Thiesfeld of Objects & Art, Betty Sorensen of Petunia's, Sara Smith of s.a.r.a., and Mary Leary of When We Were Young. Offering a variety of antiques, vintage clothing, plants, textiles, and original artwork, Shop 501 will change your idea of an antique shop. While it does house all of the typical classics of a consignment shop, this is a store where vintage meets modern. For the gardeners, Shop 501 is well-known for its plethora of garden decorations and vintage plants.

For more information, visit www.shop501.com.

Two of my favorite things collide at the next shop, **Junk Bonanza**: antiquing and travel. Junk Bonanza has locations in Minneapolis, Portland, and San Diego. Known as the "vintage market," Junk Bonanza offers unique jewelry, accessories, home decor, and pieces perfect for gifting to that sentimental someone in your life. Not only is Junk Bonanza a store perfect for the antique lover, but it also hosts special guests, indoor events, and workshops. A long list of vendors provides a variety of styles, and if you're interested in becoming a vendor yourself, an application is available online.

For more information, visit www.junkbonanza.com.

While every antique shop offers something different for each of its customers, I hope that the stores on this list will bring you the same heartwarming nostalgia that graced my busy schedule with a much-needed blast from the past. Like an old friend, these shops will make you feel like you're at home and, more importantly, like you're understood. ■



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HOMES OF TOMORROW

BY KASSIDY TARALA

After a long day in the office, running errands, or taking care of the family, there's no better feeling than falling into the warm, loving embrace of your bed. The way the soft sheets cling to you like a long-lost friend. The way the mattress is molded to perfectly curve around your exhausted body like a secret unbeknownst to the rest of the world. When you're sad, you want to go home. When you're tired, you want to go home. When you **need** to binge watch *Shameless* and curl up with a blanket and a glass (or bottle) of wine, the only place in the world you want to be is your home.

Our homes are more than just buildings to us, they are our friends: our safety, our comfort, and our personal paradise. Our houses are

where we become ourselves, so it's no wonder that people are increasingly investing in technology to protect their beloved safe havens.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 40 ➔

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From high-security cameras to remote controlled window shades, homes throughout the country are becoming more and more high-tech. According to Brian Arradondo, operations manager of Networks Cinema & Sound, the purpose of new technology used in homes is drastically different across regions of the United States, but overall it is gaining popularity nationwide. "In Alaska, where the longer periods of daylight can affect circadian rhythms, homeowners will be interested in controlled shades that open and close with the touch of a controller, so they can enjoy deeper and more refreshing sleep," says Arradondo.

In the Midwest, controlled lighting, shades, security cameras, and HVAC are some popular items in high-tech homes. Controlled by an iPad mounted to the wall, these tools can be maintained on any Apple device the homeowner chooses. Because so much in-home technology is controlled by smart phones, tablets, and other devices, Arradondo recommends to securely protect your home's Wi-Fi network and to password protect your devices.

An emphasis on home security has caused an increase in the incorporation of motion detectors and wireless cameras. These systems allow owners to be notified on their devices when movement is detected in or around a particular area of a house. Once notified, homeowners can use their mobile devices to stream the footage from their home's wireless cameras. This way you can easily check in on your puppy, be aware of any suspicious activity near your house, or simply feel safer knowing that you went the extra mile on in-home security.

Arradondo recommends consulting an expert regarding properly upgrading your home's technology. He says that people typically like to start small with smoke alarms, Nest cameras, and thermostats that connect to wireless mobile devices. By starting with these products, homeowners can familiarize themselves with the new technology around the home before getting more intricate security systems.

Outside of security, technology is used throughout homes for entertainment and convenience. From Bluetooth speakers that play throughout the house to voice recognition devices such as Google Home or Amazon Echo, homeowners are using more technology in their everyday lives. They can program their shades, outlet adapters, door locks, and appliances to recognize their voices.

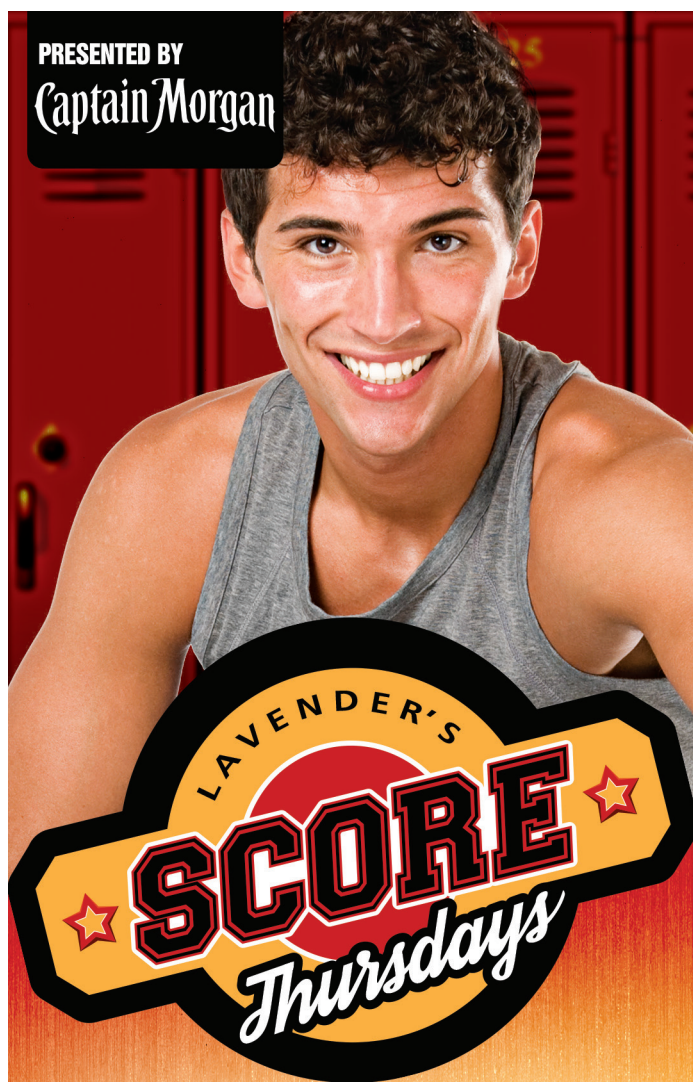
Our beloved homes are quickly becoming as secure and futuristic as they are cozy and personal. With so many new forms of technology to utilize throughout the house, it's becoming an increasingly exciting world for the homeowner. "Some of the devices we are looking forward to are transparent TVs that have screens that remain transparent until they are turned on along with several other exciting products on the way," Arradondo says. Stay tuned. ■

To learn more about making your home high-tech, visit Networks Cinema & Sound at www.ncands.com.



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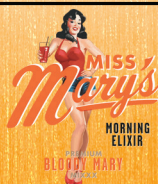
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Leather, Drag, and Catastrophes

The third annual installment of the Ms Catastrophe contest, billed as “the best worst drag in Minneapolis,” happened Saturday evening, Jan. 7 at The Saloon. There were four male contestants who performed intentionally bad female drag. There also were some really good drag performances by the evening’s hostess, Steven Patton, as “Zekira Zabertini” and by one of the evening’s judges, Emerson Kellogg. Last year’s Ms Catastrophe, Karri Plowman, was on hand to judge, perform, and give a step-down speech. The biggest catastrophe of the evening, and therefore the winner of the contest, was Derek Harley, Mr. Minneapolis Eagle 2012. The evening was a fundraiser for Minnesota Leather Pride. Unfortunately this year, as with last year, we did not see any Mr Catastrophe contestants (women dressing up in male drag).

But what exactly were we watching that evening? Why did a large crowd of people come out for an evening of really bad female drag performances? What’s up with that?

Perhaps it all goes back to something sailors have done since ancient times. When a ship crossed the equator, it was customary and expected that there would be a “line crossing” ceremony, and that “pollywogs,” sailors who were “crossing the line” for the first time, would be initiated into the Society of Neptune by “shellbacks,” sailors who had crossed the equator on previous voyages. The shellbacks would dress for the ceremony in improvised costumes, many of which involved female drag, which figuratively “crossed a line.”

These ceremonies crossed another figurative line by often involving non-consensual hazing of varying degrees of brutality. In spite of this, the ceremonies were tolerated for centuries as a morale booster even though they might have been seen as scandalous. They were entertainment and a diversion from the burdens and stresses of a long ocean voyage. (Today, most navies do not allow line-crossing ceremonies to include physical attacks on pollywogs.)

Perhaps members of the early leather community were inspired by their experiences with these ceremonies during World War II, especially with the (bad) drag portion of the ceremonies. The drag shows that became a standard part of early gay leather/biker runs, and continue to be today, could possibly be considered an homage to the (bad) drag that was part of the “crossing the line” ceremonies.

Or perhaps early gay leather runs included drag shows as entertainment because many of

the members of these clubs on the East and West Coasts worked in the entertainment industry (theater on the East Coast, films on the West Coast). The clubs therefore had access to the talents (costumes, makeup, choreography, and performing) necessary to put on a show.

It should be noted that a) the talent brought to the performances often resulted in a really good show rather than “bad drag,” and b) some men were not that thrilled by femininity in any form, including a drag show at a leather run. These men liked their leathermen as men, not masquerading as women. One of the earliest issues of *Drummer Magazine* featured on its cover a group of biker leathermen in drag called the “Cycle Sluts.” That issue turned out to be *Drummer’s* worst-selling issue ever, because the readers of *Drummer* wanted to see rugged men, not men in overblown female makeup.

A more direct inspiration for the Twin Cities Ms Catastrophe contest was one former contest producer’s memory that his redneck Texas high school had presented a Miss Catastrophe contest in which the football players dressed up in drag. Thus, the current Ms Catastrophe contest hearkens back to a long line of men, gay and straight, dressing up and performing as women (often badly).

There was another, perhaps newer, kind of drag at the Ms Catastrophe contest. Like several other recent leather events, Ms Catastrophe opened with a blessing by the Ladies of

the Lake, a mission of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. The “sisters” are men masquerading as “nuns” in whiteface makeup, whimsical wimples, and hysterical habits, an entirely different kind of feminine drag, neutered and spiritualized. Yet these sisters queer the usual image of nuns by preaching the virtues of lots of sex and lots of love.

Feminists, both lesbian and non-lesbian, might be offended at the idea of men in drag and say it’s disrespectful to women. In former years, many assumed that a straight man dressing up in women’s clothing was shameful because he was forsaking his supposed masculine superiority and adopting a weaker feminine persona, which is why, for instance, drag parties in pre-Stonewall New York City were often raided. Women who wore men’s clothing (such as Marlene Dietrich and her friends) also caused scandal, because who did they think they were? They were weak women trying to adopt a powerful male persona, and that was against the rules.

Now, in the days of greater sympathy (in some quarters, anyway) for transgender, gender-fluid, and genderless individuals, where does that leave drag performances? Perhaps drag, good or bad, illustrates just how much of a social construct the idea of gender really is. By laughing at it, drag performances call the idea of gender into question. This leaves people freer to express the gender they feel like expressing. And that’s not a bad thing. ■



The evening’s four contestants at the conclusion of this year’s Ms Catastrophe contest. Photo by Andrew Bertke, Everett Allen Photography.

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2017 Volkswagen Golf Alltrack



The Volkswagen Golf is no longer just a world-leading compact hatchback, at least in the eyes of American motorists.

For this latest edition, the Mark VII Golf, Volkswagen decided to expand the line beyond its hatchback offerings. They included the latest SportWagen in the Golf Family, as the lineup is now called. Customers can now decide whether they want just a hatchback, a sporty GTI, the performance of the Golf R, or a wagon that is accommodating and fun to drive.

Volkswagen did not stop there. The SportWagen has become quite popular among new car buyers, because there are only a few of them available out in the marketplace. Somehow, we love wagons; in particular the Subaru Outback.

This sparked a lightbulb to flash over Wolfsburg. Volkswagen can make a wagon like the Outback. They have a great all-wheel drive system called 4Motion. They also have made similar models in other markets normally called "Cross [fill in a Volkswagen model here]." To entice American customers (and to capture Subaru lovers) they have to go beyond just slapping on plastic cladding and raising the ground clearance by an inch or so.

The result is the most anticipated Volkswa-

gen in quite some time: the 2017 Golf Alltrack.

Why is the Alltrack important? Considering recent events at Volkswagen, they need to maintain their presence in this country. Otherwise, they would be lost to the financial wallow of the courts and the Federal Government. Instead of offering TDI diesel engines, Volkswagen is looking elsewhere in the short- and long-term. Since there is an interest in crossovers and SUVs, why not create a highly capable product that can go off-road and let it still be a Volkswagen?

We, as GLBT automotive consumers, love Volkswagens. We love them as much as Subarus. It sounds like this Alltrack is the right fit for our community.

As much as we appreciate SUVs and crossovers, wagons are a hit with us. The extra space behind the back seat for more cargo makes for a shape that is distinctive above all vehicles. In the Golf's case, becoming a wagon was easy, as the longer roof was a good fit for the Golf's front end. It carries on the Mark VII's sharper lines all the way to the liftgate. The wagon rides on the same wheelbase as the hatchback, which translates into the same door openings and access to the seats.

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The big difference is in ground clearance. The regular SportWagen is only 5.5 inches off the ground, while the Alltrack is lifted by 1.4 inches to 6.9 inches of clearance. With ground clearance comes some protection pieces on the lower part of the body, including a small skid piece up front, plastic cladding around the wheel arches, and lower protection diffuser on the rear bumper. The lower grille on the bumper denotes the Alltrack from the other Golf models.

Inside, there is plenty of continuity with the Golf Family and the Alltrack. The instrument panel, dials, and switchgear follow Volkswagen convention, as well as keep in line with other Golf models. The quality is superb with great touch and logic for each switch and control. Instrumentation is also logical with proper dials and readouts. The center screen helps to keep information flowing for the driver. The Alltrack sports the latest flat-bottom steering wheel from Volkswagen, replete with great controls for cruise control, information readouts and audio functions.

The SE tester we worked with offered leatherette upholstery that is durable and breathable. Front seats offer support, but are a bit firm at first. They should yield over time. Rear seat room is fine for average-sized adults. Cargo space is good, with 30.4 cubic feet behind the rear seat. This space expands to 66.5 cubic feet with the rear seat folded down.

Volkswagen has been getting a lot of praise for its latest infotainment systems, called MIB II. Our tester featured a 6.5-inch Composition Media system with clear audio controls and touch screen interfaces. This system enables three different mobile connections: Apple CarPlay, Android Auto, and Mirror Link. Through the USB connection to a smartphone, any of these systems complete the interface on the touchscreen, while enabling redundant switches on the steering wheel to control music file playback and volume. SiriusXM is available, along with HD Radio and Bluetooth connectivity. Our tester also came with the Fender Premium audio system, which emits a powerful sound throughout the cabin.

The Golf Alltrack comes with the 1.8-liter TSI turbocharged four-cylinder engine as its only power source. It does the job with 170 horsepower and 199 pound-feet of torque, the same numbers as in the regular Golf and SportWagen models. It is a very solid engine for this 3,358-pound lifted wagon. Our tester came with the quicker-shifting six-speed DSG gearbox. On certain models, one can choose a manual transmission later in 2017.

By selecting any Alltrack, you get the 4Motion all-wheel drive system. It is a good

system. It is even better with the model-exclusive Off Road drive mode. Most all-wheel drive systems will work to find the right traction by sending torque to any wheel that needs it. The 4Motion adds a drive mode that enables this system to work in non-tarmac situations, such as dirt roads. It has been noted that Golf Alltracks had been tested on even tougher traction situations and done exceptionally well.

In terms of fuel economy, the TSI/DSG/4Motion combination averaged 23.4 MPG. We can blame this on the extremely cold temperatures the Alltrack was exposed to during testing.

Having a long wheelbase means having a very smooth ride. Because the Alltrack has a higher ground clearance, the ride quality is quite soft. This is actually good when things get a bit rough, because of the extended suspension travel can absorb uneven surfaces, even on the highway. Handling is competent, but do expect some roll in the banked corners.

Steering feel is a bit on the soft side on center, but it is a precise system with great turning radius and at-wheel response. Brakes are also quite good with a strong feel at the pedal and in the system. Stops are quite good in normal, panic, and winter situations. Consider all of this and trust that this is not a GTI or Golf R we are talking about. This is a purpose-built Volkswagen model made to get through tougher conditions, such as our winters.

Our tester did not come with the available Driver's Assistance Package; however, one can get it on the SE and SEL models. This is worth noting because of our look at active safety features that will help keep you on the road even in the worst of winter. If there is an Alltrack available with these features (such as adaptive cruise, forward collision warning, and blind spot monitoring) consider it.

Pricing starts at \$25,850 for a Golf Alltrack S with manual transmission. This SE tester came with a sticker price of \$31,350.

The Golf Alltrack is a superb addition to a highly coveted car line. Volkswagen had the right intent to create a lifted wagon for the active lifestyle set by retaining continuity with the rest of the Golf Family. This is ideal for those who want a Subaru Outback, but with a conventional engine design and German engineering.

We can go on comparing the Golf Alltrack and the Outback, but it is plainly obvious that there is now a choice for a highly capable non-crossover/SUV for under \$37,000.

Which one would you choose? The next time you're shopping for such a vehicle, please consider the Volkswagen Golf Alltrack. ■

Alone in Sonoma

My state of mind this Valentine's Day:

Last month I attended a dear friend's 60th birthday celebration in Sonoma, California. Orchestrated for Brian by his long-time partner, Doug, it was a magnificent affair replete with a rambling vineyard backdrop and retro music by a purple-and-gray-haired singer whose day job is that of neurologist.

Brian and I go back to sixth grade in Cedar Rapids; we were football teammates, double-date partners (that is, before either of us came out as queer), and bar-side confidants. Later, Brian would become the first man I ever kissed; it was two quick, but intense, kisses in the front seat of a car when I was in my mid-40s wrestling with sexuality and gender issues.

Brian is one of those rare individuals who combines class with charm and who excels at storytelling with an innocence that's endearing to anyone he meets. Like me, he was a relatively late-bloomer, although he came out as gay 10 years sooner than I did as transgender.

Our hosts were Curtis and Ernie, a couple of 35 years, who were in the midst of renovating what had been the farmhouse for a chicken farm situated on five wine country acres. The setting included a torn apart two-story, replete with open beams and blue-penciled plywood walls, which sat adjacent to a new in-ground swimming pool and spectacular patio that emptied onto thousands of vines and green-green grass.

I felt honored to be asked to my dear friend's milestone birthday celebration.

What I hadn't expected was how alone it would make me feel.

The 50 or so party guests included Brian's East Coast family, two twentysomething nephews, a two-year-old great niece, a woman Brian dated before coming out, and many same-sex couples, most of whom were high-flying DINKS (double-income, no kids). I met business owners, upper echelon IT specialists, and a neurosurgeon-neurologist husband-wife. The one connection for everyone: their adoration and love for Brian.

Thus, I watched as person after person attested to how my friend had touched their lives. I also listened as Brian shared about growing up in England (his father was military intelligence) and then Iowa and about his now-gone parents and two older brothers. A one-time salesman of construction cranes and military equipment (think Bradley Fighting Vehicles), he also shared "bar stories" from India, Pakistan, and France.

All the while, my heart sank further and further. I kept reminding myself (don't ask me why, it wasn't healthy at all) about having no one to help celebrate my 60th not even a month before. Time and again, as I looked out at dozens of happy people along with pretty trays of catered

food and white linen-draped tables, I felt incredibly alone, sans date, entourage, or hope.

Is it me? Is it because I'm intense and passionate, or as someone once said, that I'm the kind to not let go until I've accomplished my goal?

Or is it because I'm trans, which by its nature is a very solitary journey? Could it be because I came out when I was 52 whereas Brian's had an extra 10 years to build a community?

Maybe it's simply that I'm always too busy to make the time.

Mostly, I'm okay with being alone. But not always, and certainly not today. Quit your whining.

All of that swirled in my brain then and after. I tried like hell not to feel sorry for myself and even more, worked to be an optimistic Buddhist; who knows what the future holds?

Yet as I sat there, among legions of half-full wine bottles which a part of me craved (yet another story), I couldn't help but feel that I wanted to own what Brian had. Sure it was envy, even jealousy. So call me human. Actually, that's probably a good place to start.

I often talk about the "Four Commonalities" that everyone shares. One of those commonalities is the desire to love and be loved; it's universal. Love nourishes the soul and allows for the spirit to thrive. With love, one can do anything. Without it, the spirit can wither and die.

At one point in the festivities — which, please know, were grand and good and quite delightful by any account — I found myself wanting to be able to whisper "I love you," to someone, to anyone.

It didn't happen.

I drove away from Sonoma desperately needing to write in my journal, my portable therapist and refuge from life. At the airport, the edge of my hand became ink-covered after so many words.

I promised myself that I'd do better, try harder, make precious time for others. I swore that I'd host more dinners, meet more often for breakfast, and show up as asked.

I'd even take risks with new relationships. Yes, I would do all of that.

I hope. ■

Ellen (Ellie) Krug is the author of Getting to Ellen: A Memoir about Love, Honesty and Gender Change (2013). She speaks and trains on diversity and inclusion topics; visit www.humaninspirationworks.com where you can also sign up for her newsletter. She welcomes your comments at ellenkrugwriter@gmail.com.

TROLÍN, UN DIABLITO ROSA

POR RODRO



It is nice to go out biking!
C'est plaisant de sortir en vélo!



I go out with my cousin "Big Trolinazer!"
Je sors avec mon cousin "Grand Trolinateur"!



But his bike is a bit special...
Son vélo est un peu spécial...



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C'est pénible de toucher au sol.



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